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I wish to express my support for the use of red light cameras in the state of Connecticut. In my town of New Have, there is a culture of reckless driving. Motorists routinely ignore red lights, endangering cyclists, pedestrians, and other drivers. This behavior is not only dangerous; it creates a negative feedback loop. When a significant portion of motorists ignore something as basic and fundamental as a red light, and do so without consequence, the act of violating existing traffic laws becomes more acceptable and more prevalent. This behavior serves to degrade the overall quality of life in the communities in which it occurs.

Both the city and its police department have recognized this problem and are actively working to address it. In the fall of 2008, the city of New Haven, passed "complete streets" legislation aimed at creating and maintaining a transportation system that is safe and accessible to all citizens. For its part, the New Haven Police Department has set up a traffic safety hotline where citizens can report on unsafe or illegal driving. This measure has been coupled with a marked increase in enforcement at reported problem areas throughout the city.

However, despite their best efforts, the city of New Haven and its police department do not have all the tools they need to properly tackle this issue. Traditional traffic enforcement is expensive and requires a lot of manpower. At a time when cities and the State of Connecticut are facing record deficits, dramatically increasing funding to put enough police on traffic duty to eliminate or significantly reduce the incidence of red light running is not a feasible option. What we need are innovative solutions that reach beyond traditional enforcement measures. Automated enforcement using red light cameras is an efficient, effective and economical way to reduce the incidence of red light running. Numerous states including California are already using this technology and many European countries have been realizing the benefits of red light cameras for years.

Studies have shown that automated enforcement using red light cameras can significantly reduce the frequency of red light running. With these reductions come reductions in serious crashes, injuries and fatalities. Moreover, the use of red light cameras allows for a much more consistent enforcement of the law – typically there are only consequences for running a red light if an officer happens to see you do it. The consistent and uniform enforcement offered by red light cameras is simply not achievable via traditional methods unless substantial amounts of money are invested in placing police officers at every problem location throughout the day.

I sincerely hope the Connecticut General Assembly will allow New Haven and other communities to realize the significant benefits offered by red light cameras, by permitting their use.

Very truly yours,

Thomas Harned